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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PROSPECTS FOR PEACE, ARAB REFORM, OMAN'S UN  
SPEECH, ISRAEL-HEZBOLLAH CONFLICT

¶1. SUMMARY: Arabic daily "Al-Watan" says an "honest effort" is needed to achieve Middle East peace. State Arabic daily "Oman" calls for "gradual reforms" in the Arab world to stem regional strife. "Oman" also reports Foreign Minister Bin Alawi's UN speech, and notes Western "collusion" with Israel in Hezbollah combat. END SUMMARY.

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COVERAGE  
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¶2. The approach and start of Ramadan brought with it significantly lighter and less substantive coverage of international affairs, with reporting, for example, on holiday messages received by the Sultan splashed on front pages across all six dailies. In articles culled from Western news agencies, papers did continue to report fallout from the Pope's speech and subsequent apologies, as well as the continuing negotiations regarding Iran's nuclear program.

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BLOCK QUOTES: "HONEST EFFORT" TOWARD PEACE  
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¶3. "Al-Watan" (privately owned daily, circulation 42,000) on September 21 published an editorial, "No Need for More Deals, Just an Honest Effort":  
"Several issues must be taken into account if we are to forge true peace [in the Middle East] instead of merely adding initiatives, resolutions and agreements. The first issue is the need to distinguish terrorism from legitimate national resistance against invaders. The second issue is the need to stop being selective about what international resolutions are implemented and to instead base peace on international legitimacy and implementation of all resolutions. Third, seeking partial solutions is no longer acceptable. Movement toward peace must involve all aspects of a conflict. Fourth, the time frame for peace negotiations should be defined and have a deadline... Unimplemented resolutions need an honest effort to activate them and turn them into reality."

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ARAB WORLD SHOULD IMPLEMENT GRADUAL REFORMS  
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¶4. On September 23, a columnist in Arabic government-owned daily "Oman" (circulation 38,000) wrote about "The World at A Crossroads":  
"The goals of the war waged by America against Iraq, Afghanistan, Al Qaeda, and, indirectly, Islamic movements (especially Hezbollah in Lebanon) were to get rid of certain organizations and political

regimes such as the Taliban in Afghanistan, Usama Bin Laden, and Saddam's regime. Then the goal expanded to end the Islamic entity that gained power after legitimate elections in Palestine. Five years after September 11, the world is more tense and hate-filled, and religious conflicts have erupted between the Christian West and Muslim East. The world is witnessing a situation that has become ever more complicated since the end of the Second World War. A new philosophy is needed to deal with complicated issues and conflicts. The UN needs real reform, especially in the Security Council. The Arab world, on the other hand, needs to reconsider its internal problems and the fate of its people. Thus, it should implement gradual reforms to its political and economic systems and fight corruption."

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OMANI FOREIGN MINISTER'S UN SPEECH  
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15. On September 24, "Oman" commented on Omani Minister Responsible for Foreign Affairs Yousef bin Alawi's UNGA speech, in its editorial, "Highly Important and Complicated Changes":

"While the Sultanate confirms its position towards the Palestinian issue and towards Israel's violations against Palestinians... it is also among those who support the Lebanese through resolution 1701. [Bin Alawi's] speech [reconfirmed those stances, and also] expressed worry about the deteriorating security situation in Iraq. He voiced support for the Abuja Peace Agreement between the Sudanese government and the opposition. He mentioned the necessity of keeping the Middle East free from nuclear power, while keeping the door open concerning the Iranian nuclear issue. He also said that there should be an international strategy to fight terrorism, and a balance between security and human rights."

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WESTERN "COLLUSION" WITH ISRAEL IN HEZBOLLAH COMBAT  
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16. "Oman" on September 25 published the editorial "Late

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Confession":

"The Arab confession on the failure of the peace project is late, wasting many opportunities to...bring the process back to the right track. However, this failure has been balanced by the victory of the Lebanese resistance, which demonstrated that America and the West stand behind Israel...the Israeli war against Lebanon has revealed Western collusion with Israel."

GRAPPO